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Cottonwood

Hills, Reno Co. at odds due to slow progress

By [Mary Clarkin](#)

Cottonwood Hills developer Lane Neville and Reno County officials voiced frustration with each other Tuesday over the slow pace of paperwork and decision-making.

More than six months ago, Neville asked county commissioners to improve segments of East 4th and Buhler Road, running along the future golf course community's southern and western borders. He roughly projected the cost at about \$1.6 million.

A dismayed Neville, noting \$3 million already has been invested into the golf course community project now under construction, still is waiting for the commission's response.

"It seems like this is the issue that will never die," he said.

Commissioners appear likely to support paving about a mile of the gravel-surfaced East 4th. Neville also is pushing commissioners to agree to widen Buhler Road at the entrance to Cottonwood Hills, which will be north of the intersection with 4th.

He is amenable to delaying additional improvements to Buhler Road until housing development progresses.

County Administrator Ed Williams suggested the further enhancements could come after the developed properties in Cottonwood Hills are paying, collectively, more than \$450,000 annually in real estate property taxes.

At various times, the finger-pointing over the delay fixed on commissioners, County Engineer Dean Chesnut, and Neville.

"I think we were trying to look for a final plat," Commissioner Larry Sharp said.

The developer has an approved preliminary plat for the nearly 600-acre site, but must obtain final plat approval for the first phase.

Neville expected Chesnut already would have developed his own estimate for the proposed roadwork, but Chesnut said the Cottonwood Hills group had only just provided digital files.

"I don't know how Dean can give you a meaningful cost," said County Counselor Joe O'Sullivan, in defense of Chesnut.

"We are communicating," County Administrator Ed Williams said, but there tend to be "drop-out periods" in talks between the developer and county staff.

Commissioner Francis "Shep" Schoepf favors combining Cottonwood Hills road improvements with improvements to Yoder Road, while Sharp expressed interest in bettering 4th, between Kent and Victory.

Cottonwood Hills Update

An update on plans for Cottonwood Hills, at East 4th and Buhler Road:

- * The 18-hole Nick Faldo Championship Golf Course is slated to open for limited play in September 2005, and regular play in 2006.
- * Some 70 to 80 housing lots will be included in the first phase of development, and the developer expects 50 of them to be sold in the first month.
- * Lots for single-family homes are priced at \$50,000 to \$110,000.
- * Housing prices will run from about \$140,000 to \$150,000 for a townhouse, to \$400,000 to \$500,000 for single-family homes.
- * Final platting is anticipated by early 2005, and lot sales will begin. Housing construction is expected to start in 2005.
- * Besides single-family homes, town homes, patio homes, and golfing cabins for short-term stays will be included in the first phase. Residential lots large enough to accommodate horses also will be available.